

HUSBAND

Keith

Hooker

Born

Place

Chr.

Place

Marr.

Place

Died

Place

Bur.

Place

HUSBAND'S FATHER

HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES

WIFE

Born

Place

Chr.

Place

Died

Place

Bur.

Place

WIFE'S FATHER

WIFE'S OTHER HUSBANDS

HUSBAND

Keith

Hooker

Wife

Ward Examiners: 1.

2.

Stake or Mission

HUSBAND'S MOTHER

NAME & ADDRESS OF PERSON SUBMITTING SHEET

RELATION OF ABOVE TO HUSBAND

RELATION OF ABOVE TO WIFE

FOUR GENERATION SHEETS FOR FILING ONLY

YES ☐ NO ☐

DATE SUBMITTED TO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

SEX

M

F

CHILDREN

List each child (whether living or dead) in order of birth

Given Names

SURNAME

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

PROGRESSIVE HEALTH SERVICES

dba DUCHESNE VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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OTHER MARRIAGES

NECESSARY EXPLANATIONS

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Provo's Flying Doctor Part of 'Vanishing Breed'

By KAREN M. MAGNUSON
United Press International

Keith Hooker is a doctor who loves to live dangerously as part of a vanishing breed of flying physicians who take to the air to reach patients in the hinterland.

A beat-up propeller sitting on a wooden pole in his front yard shows the scars of a recent plane wreck — only one of six mishaps — but the Provo pilot refuses to let fear get in his way.

The Iowa-born daredevil learned to fly at a grass strip and has landed his trusty aircraft on everything from southern Utah deserts to the snow-covered riverbanks of Alaska — all in the name of medicine.

"The advantage to flying, first of all, is that it's safe. I've survived six plane wrecks. I'd rather fly than drive. It's faster, too," said Hooker, a 45-year-old father of eight.

He earned his bachelor's degree at Arizona State University, attended medical school at the University of Oregon and was an intern in Riverside, Calif., before he received his first assignment in public health service in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1965.

He ended up moving to Kotzebue, a small Eskimo town about 200 miles north of Nome, and performed such varied tasks as autopsies, fitting glasses, delivering babies and pulling teeth.

"Eskimos are very friendly people. I'd fly up and visit a series of villages along the rivers. We would X-ray them, give them pills for TB (tuberculosis,) and then I'd develop and read the film in a tent I brought along," Hooker said.

The doctor said he was assigned to 28 villages "in an area about the size of Utah." An aide in each village served as a language translator.



Steve Heiner Photo

Dr. Keith Hooker is a flying physician who is known for making house calls by plane.

I landed in this one village, and all of these people started running

off, thinking they were happy to see me, but they only looked in

Hooker said. "Someone later told me they thought I was the boot-

oor. So much for being a big important doctor!"

Hooker's closest brush with death came when he was using his plane to hunt about 50 miles north of the Arctic Circle. His wife, Phyllis, nine months pregnant at the time, was with him.

"I went to land on a sandbar and I misjudged it. I tried to take off again from the sandbar, ended up in the river and flipped upside down," he recalled. "We swam to shore and waited about eight hours until someone picked us up. But we went right back the next day, pulled the plane out, filled it with gas and flew it home."

Hooker moved to Utah in 1970 at the request of his wife, who wanted to finish her bachelor's degree at Brigham Young University, and he landed a job as chief of medicine at the BYU Health Center.

It was then that he met Eugene Davies, another flying doctor, and the two took turns flying 200 miles southeast to Hanksville to tend to the ill. The duo, bolstered by grant money from a private non-profit foundation, added more towns to the flight schedule and became known throughout rural Utah.

Unfortunately, Davies died in a plane crash in 1973 after one of the engines in his aircraft failed on takeoff. "He was like a father to me," Hooker said. "He was the dreamer and I was the one who did the running around."

And run around he did. Hooker took on the full load himself, going on a flying spree in a 250-mile radius to Castle Dale on Mondays and Wednesdays, Milford on Tuesdays, Salina on Thursdays and East Carbon on Fridays.

Hooker also was seen flying, medicine bag in hand, into Green River, Duchesne, Fillmore and Price.

"I've landed a lot on local

look for fence posts," the flying physician said. "The trick is to find a place so you can push the plane off the road... and then you look for a ride. Sometimes my patients picked me up on their way in."

Hooker's flying days now are limited to doctoring in Duchesne, about 100 miles east of Provo. He spends most of his time on the ground as director of the emergency room at Utah Valley Regional Medical Center.

"We've done what we set out to accomplish. We've gone in, set up clinics, got them going — to the point where, in Castle Dale, we were seeing 60 people a week — and then attracted permanent doctors to move in," Hooker said.

He said it is a sign that flying physicians are on their way out.

"It's become more competitive in the health field and more large hospitals are putting clinics in smaller cities," he said.

"I used to be in the bush taking care of everything. But now specialists are moving into those rural areas. Some of them burn out in the big cities and are willing to take on a smaller patient load and semi-retire."

Hooker has several reminders of his fast-paced flying days, however. His basement walls are lined with furs from bears, foxes, beavers and wolverines — animals he hunted in Alaska — and shelves feature mastodon teeth, whale bones, walrus tusks and Eskimo clothing.

His experiences also will be chronicled in a book. A manuscript was started by Green River author Pearl Baker, who focused on Hooker in Alaska, and will be rewritten by BYU professor Keith Karren to blend in with another near-fatal Hooker endeavor — a month-long climb of Mt. McKinley in 1982.

Karren said he hopes to finish the manuscript by the end of this year.

